

Testimony
Garry Brumback
Town Manager, Town of Southington
Before the Finance Committee
March 13, 2014

RE: SB-29, AN ACT AUTHORIZING AND ADJUSTING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER PURPOSES SUPPORT

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB-29.

This year's budget maintains the state's commitment to funding for the Clean Water Fund, which funds projects to meet state and federal mandated water pollution control projects, nutrient removal plant upgrades, Long Island Sound projects and Safe Drinking Water projects. This funding is critical to meeting the state's environmental goals.

Currently, the state Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) is in the process of implementing a "Phosphorus Reduction Strategy for Inland Non-Tidal Waters" which will impact a number of towns and cities across Connecticut, requiring costly upgrades to wastewater treatment plants to comply with more stringent phosphorus reduction limits. In some cases, this will require multimillion dollar upgrades: *Southington \$18.5 million; Danbury \$25- 30 million; Wallingford \$19 million; Meriden \$13.5 million; and Cheshire \$7.2 million.*

Unfortunately, these municipalities are being burdened with addressing what is essentially a statewide problem resulting from excessive levels of phosphorus in certain water basins.

Recognizing that these communities are bearing the brunt of achieving statewide environmental goals, the legislature adopted Public Act 13-239, which increases from 30% to 50% the amount municipalities are eligible to receive under the Clean Water Fund grant program.

Unfortunately, this increased reimbursement is only available to the first three construction contracts entered into by municipalities before July 1, 2018. This unfairly penalizes municipalities who may still be awaiting permit renewals or facing other issues in moving forward with a construction contract for phosphorus reduction plant upgrades.

HB-5081, which was unanimously approved by the Environment Committee and referred to the Finance Committee, corrects this inequity by making the remaining projects eligible for the increased reimbursement. This will assist these municipalities in achieving EPA/DEEP's standards without unfairly burdening residents in the affected municipalities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue.